



Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission
February 24, 2010
Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission took place on Wednesday, February 24, 2010. The meeting was held at the Parks and Recreation, Mesquite Room, 900 S. Randolph Way, Tucson, Arizona.

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 3:36 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance:

- **Commission Members Present:** Chairperson Steve Anderson, Ward 4; Elayne Feder, Ward 2; Deborah Tosline, Ward 3; Bob Kovitz, Ward 6; (Ward 5 appointment is vacant).
- **Commission Members Excused:** Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor's Office; Kristin Almquist, Ward 1
- **Staff Members Present:** John Sefton, Deputy Director, Administration; Jim Conroy, East District Administrator; Susan Basford, Zoo and Reid Park Administrator; Peg Weber, Northwest District Administrator; Wayne Barnett, Southwest District Superintendent; Jane Duarte, Capital Program Manager; and Irma Adams, Recording Secretary.
- **Staff Members Absent:** Fred H. Gray, Director; Reenie Ochoa, Southwest District Administrator
- **Others in Attendance:** none

2. Approval of Minutes of January 27, 2010

Motion (Tosline/Feder) to approve the minutes of January 27, 2010. Motion passed by a voice vote of 3 ayes and one abstention (Kovitz).

3. Call to the Audience

No one present.

4. Letter of Commendation to Rick Garcia, Parks and Recreation Employee

Mr. Garcia was not present.

5. Commission Subcommittee Reports

a. Awards Program

Peg Weber stated that award presentations occurred at the February 9, 2010 Mayor and Council meeting. Award recipients were enthusiastic and the Mayor and Council meeting was well attended by Parks and Recreation staff. Ms. Weber suggested keeping the award presentations at the Mayor and Council meetings.

b. Commission Strategic Services Plan (standing item)

Chairperson Steve Anderson stated there was nothing to report.

c. Community Advocacy Group/Pima Parks Alliance

Mr. Anderson stated that a meeting was held recently and things are up to date.

d. Foundation Liaison and Assistance

Chairperson Anderson stated he had not taken any action on the item.

6. Discuss Outline for the Commission's Visibility and Marketing Report – Deborah Tosline

Deborah Tosline stated the brief outline was expanded with comments from the January meeting. Ms. Tosline asked for additional comments from the members and staff.

Elayne Feder asked if the Council Members' permission had been received to proceed on the presentation.

Ms. Tosline stated that the Commissioners had discussed contacting his/her Council Member to see if he/she would be interested in a presentation about Parks and Recreation. Ms. Tosline did not think permission for the report was necessary. Ms. Tosline continued that the report will be a summary of Parks and Recreation and Commissioners are the liaisons to the Council Members. Once the report is completed, each Commissioner will present it to his/her Council Member.

John Sefton stated that the whole concept of advocating for Parks and Recreation correlates with the Commission's goal of establishing a visibility and marketing plan. Mr. Sefton continued by stating that it is important to have the necessary tools to heighten the advocacy. The report is relative to the Commission's purpose and may become an educational tool for the Council Members. Mr. Sefton believed it was very appropriate for the Commission to proceed.

Susan Basford asked if the Commissioners met regularly with their Council Member to update them.

The Commissioners all replied that they did not meet regularly with their council person.

Ms. Tosline stated that occasionally speaks with a staff member at the Ward Three Office. Ms. Tosline continued by stating that the council staff read the minutes. Ms. Tosline reiterated that comments made at the last meeting were incorporated into the recent draft. Ms. Tosline stated that visual summary slides might be best showing the number of parks; rate of growth; a brief historical comparison such as the rate of increase in parks and/or centers over time, etc. and then show that based on population growth projections the future needs. Ms. Tosline also suggested showing the current status with the staff reductions, pool closures, etc.

Bob Kovitz asked Ms. Tosline what the overall goal of the presentation was. Is the purpose to work through the Council Offices to present the information and have them educate their constituents and other interest groups?

Ms. Tosline stated the initial discussion came about as a result of the possibility of a Bond election. Focus was centered on how information could best be conveyed to the public. It was the consensus of the Commissioners to create an educational document on the needs and usage of bond funds for Parks and Recreation in an effort to encourage the public to vote "yes" in the bond election. The other purpose of the report was for use by the Commissioners as a liaison between the Department and the community.

Mr. Kovitz stated that the worst case scenario would be that the Council Members are made aware of the issues through the presentation. Best case scenario would be that the Council Members would be excited about the report and would want to hold a Ward meeting that focuses on the issues.

Ms. Tosline stated that at last summer's meeting the Commissioners discussed contacting their Council Members about the presentation and asking for feedback. Commissioners can speak with their Council Member at anytime.

Mr. Kovitz stated it would be great if the Council Members embraced the document as their own. Mr. Kovitz reiterated the ideal situation would be for the Council Members to adopt the document and share it with their constituents. Mr. Kovitz stated that the Commissioners should visit their Council Members and ask them to review the draft plan.

Ms. Tosline felt that the document was not yet ready for review by the Council Members. However, once the plan is close to being finalized, the Council Members will be asked for their comments.

Jim Conroy suggested the report convey the significant budget cuts undergone by the Department this year as well as directly correlate to maybe five to eight issues. Mr. Conroy continued by stating that the reality will set in when people realize 17 pools are closed this summer. Last summer, the Department hired about 1,200 youth and this summer will hire about 600. Another area hit hard is the Sports Unit. The Department will only offer softball leagues. Due to the budget cuts, leagues are no longer offered in basketball, volleyball, or adult baseball. Mr. Conroy asked the Commission to communicate the affect of the budget cuts on the services offered by the Department. If Parks and Recreation undergoes one more level of cuts, this will drastically impact our services. Staff will be happy to articulate what the cuts have been for possible inclusion in the report.

Susan Basford stated that as difficult as the cuts have been, there are also hidden impacts that the Council may be unaware of. Parks and Recreation has always been a huge provider of jobs for youth in the community. The closure of the 17 pools will definitely affect the number of youth employed this summer.

Ms. Tosline agreed that those types of details are important and asked staff to provide them to her for possible inclusion in the report. Ms. Tosline continued by stating that the sports league information and the cuts to youth employment were definitely important examples that the community needed to be made aware of.

Peg Weber stated that another area of value is having staff in our parks. Employees are a source of safe refuge for the public in times of need. One good example is Rick Garcia, the employee from Murrieta Park, who assisted the young lady that was abducted last week. Mr. Garcia acted quickly and had the girl write down everything she could remember about her abductor and that assisted TPD is finding him. Ms. Weber continued by stating that in past years, the Department hired 320 lifeguards but will only be hiring 110 due to the pool closures. The Department has invested time in training these lifeguards who return to work every summer and are the cream of crop as far as the community's youth.

Mr. Kovitz stated it is hard to see what is no longer there. For instance, the pools will be there but they will be empty. Mr. Kovitz continued by stating that the presentation needs to show what was there before and draw lines through the items that were cut.

Mr. Conroy stated that the Department has not done a good job of telling their story and has not been proactive enough. Also, for many years staff has taken great pride in getting things done regardless of the available resources. Mr. Conroy felt that mentality had backfired on the Department because as resources dwindled staff still got the job done. However, the budget cuts through the years have resulted

in a strain on the Department's staff and resources. Mr. Conroy stated he was very concerned about the next level of cuts. Mr. Conroy asked the Commissioners to be the Department's ambassadors or advocates.

Ms. Basford agreed with Mr. Kovitz about the importance of making the presentation to the Council Offices and getting them engaged in the process. Ms. Basford stated that the Council Members and the community are unaware of the fact that there are so many hidden costs involved. Ms. Basford stated that staff would be happy to prepare factual pieces for inclusion in the document.

Ms. Tosline stated that she would appreciate staff feedback. Ms. Tosline continued by stating she would email the document to Commissioners and staff and for their input.

Mr. Kovitz felt that staff feedback would be very helpful and would allow comparison of differences; for example, collaborative partnerships that are occur in one or two Wards but are non-existent in other Wards.

Ms. Tosline stated she would schedule a happy hour for Commissioners to meet and continue discussion of the Visibility/Marketing presentation.

7. Budget Report

a. Budget Strategies/Requirements – Current Fiscal Year and Fiscal Year 2011

John Sefton stated that the Department had spent 57% of their allocation at this time which reflects a revised budget amount of \$41,811,000.

Mr. Kovitz asked if there were any seasonal items that might show up later and throw the budget off?

Mr. Sefton stated that seasonal budget variations are always a challenge to the Department. Mr. Sefton continued by stating that with summer programming around the corner, an increase in revenue and expenditures will be visible. However, when compared to previous years, the numbers are actually close. Mr. Sefton continued by stating there were significant reductions in the staffing levels and costs associated with the eleven layoffs and eight demotions. Staff is strictly monitoring spending practices and/or curtailed.

Mr. Kovitz asked why the Public Information Office expenditures were low. That is one area where Parks and Recreation could tell their story.

Mr. Sefton stated that significant reductions were made to advertising. The Department chose to cut the publishing of its Program Guide and Class Catalog from four times a year to three times per year. The paper type was also changed in an effort to save some money. Press releases are still being used to inform the public about Department news. Mr. Sefton continued by stating that Tucson City Golf was overspent but that is a seasonal change. Parks and Recreation received its fiscal year 2011 allocation in the amount of \$41,025,410. The distribution of those dollars will be split building revenues and building several line items like travel and training, professional services from zero dollar base with the target of \$41,025,410. That amount is a budgeting and target number. There is a still a series of approvals to go through.

8. Staff Reports

a. Capital Projects Report

Jane Duarte reported some of the highlights as follows: construction of the Udall Park soccer fields began on February 22, 2010; Rio Vista Park was completed with a dedication scheduled for Saturday, February 27; Purple Heart Park little league field is under construction; Pantano River Park project is going well and staff met with Joan Lionetti, Director of Tucson Clean and Beautiful to address some concerns with the memorial park. Silverlake Park parking lot is close to completion; the little league field lighting projects at Vista del Prado and Freedom Parks are underway. Arroyo Chico Greenway Park project is under construction; Lincoln Park softball complex field project, plans are at 100% and will go to permits soon; staff is getting ready to submit the Zoo African expansion next week for permits.

Mr. Kovitz asked what the CDBG funding level would be for next year?

Ms. Duarte stated that last year's allocation was \$1.8 million and staff hoped the amount would remain the same. As yet, the allocation is unknown. Ms. Duarte continued stating that with a donation from the Tucson Parks Foundation a shade structure was installed and completed at the Archer Center playground.

b. Southwest District Report

Wayne Barnett reported that in January Southwest District staff mainly worked on the Senior Olympics Festival. Participation was down slightly from 2,100 to 1,700 from last year but the event was a still success. Completion of the Silverlake Park parking lot will be significant as it will alleviate parking issues during baseball and soccer seasons. Also, in January, Ormsby Recreation Center was closed as part of the budget cuts. The KIDCO participants were relocated to another KIDCO program. Civic Events crew was busy in January with the Ft. Lowell Shootout and MLK celebration.

c. East District Report

Mr. Conroy reported that the Udall Park Farmer's Market began on January 29 and is a success. East District signed a contract to allow a total of 18 farmer's markets; there are 32 vendors and lots of fresh locally grown vegetables and products. Attendance has been running between 600 and 700 people. The Udall Park soccer field project land has been cleared in preparation for the construction and the target completion date is July 22, 2010. Mr. Conroy continued by stating that the Michael Perry Park/Pantano Linear Park is a County-funded by 2004 Bond Funds and the path will be expanded 2.7 miles. The Udall soccer field and Lincoln softball field complex are also being built with 2004 Bond funds. Originally, there was \$6 million in 2004 Bond funds for an eastside sports complex. However, the Department could not find land for purchase so the money was split between Udall and Lincoln. As a result of not having to purchase land, all of the money went directly to the design and construction of the properties. Mr. Conroy continued by stating that the new lit, little league field at Purple Heart Park will be named after Deshaun Glover, the young boy who was tragically killed in Reid Park. The dedication will occur during the Rincon Little League's opening ceremonies on March 20, 2010.

d. Northwest District Report

Ms. Weber reported that the Orlando y Diego Mendoza Park would be dedicated on March 20, 2010. Ms. Weber continued by stating that on April 18, the Rosendo S. Perez Park will be dedicated. On Saturday, February 27, the Rio Vista Park will hold its dedication at 10:00 a.m. Jacome Plaza renovations entail removing a tall berm and moving a retaining wall to make space for vendors during special events. These changes will ensure that the sidewalk is not blocked. Juhan Park has fields that

are being renovated and a new field being built. Completion is expected by the end of March. The Friends of Tucson's Birthplace, a non-profit, is working on the completion of the Mission Gardens. The Friends held a retreat on February 20 to discuss fundraising and raising consciousness within the community about the project. Ms. Weber stated that calls are coming in about the upcoming pool closures.

e. Tucson City Golf Report

John Sefton asked if there were any questions or comments on the report.

f. Zoo and Reid Park Operations Report

Ms. Basford stated that Reid Park Operations had been dedicated to Hi Corbett and spring training. Late breaking news from the Zoo, a name was picked for the new Zebra, "Tuari". One of the Globetrotters, Buckets Bailey, will be at the Zoo on February 26 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.; basketballs will be given to the Polar Bears. Ms. Basford continued by stating that March 4, 2010 was Senior Safari at the Zoo and admission would be free.

g. Director's Report

- Update on Colorado Rockies/Hi Corbett Field (standing item)

John Sefton stated there was nothing new to report on Rockies negotiations.

9. Mayor and Council Agenda Items

• Future, Pending, and Adopted Agenda Items

Mr. Sefton stated that on March 9, 2010, the official naming of the El Parque de San Cosme and Naming of the Rosendo S. Perez Park will be voted on by Mayor and Council. Also, the Service Agreement with the University of Arizona for the Evaluation of the City's KIDCO Program was rescheduled from February 23 to March 23, 2010.

Mayor and Council Agenda items since the January 27, 2010 meeting

Parks and Recreation Service Agreement	Service Agreement with the University of Arizona for the Evaluation of the City's KIDCO Program	February 23, 2010 rescheduled to March 23	Consent Agenda Item
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10. Commission Future Agenda Items and Next Meeting Date

Future agenda items:

- Outline for Commission's Visibility and Marketing Report (standing item);
- Budget Strategies/Requirements-Current and Next Fiscal Year (standing item).

Next meeting date is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 24, 2010** at 3:30 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation Administration office, Mesquite Room, 900 S. Randolph Way.

14. Adjournment

It was the consensus of the Commission to adjourn at 4:36 p.m.